



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

April 11, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D. *Sally*
Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: U.S. Department of Education Approval of Amendments to the
Michigan Department of Education ESEA Flexibility Request

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has approved three amendments to the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request. The ESEA Flexibility allows school districts more freedom in how they use some of their federal dollars to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps; recognizes schools that are meeting or exceeding achievement goals; and ensures students have effective educators in their schools.

For background, MDE's initial ESEA Flexibility was approved in July 2012. As we implemented the Flexibility, we also began monitoring how the changes were affecting schools and students. Based on feedback from school districts across the state, in December 2012, MDE convened members of the Education Alliance, which represents state education associations for teachers, administrators, and school boards. State Superintendent Mike Flanagan requested that the Education Alliance work with the MDE to reach consensus on amendments that would reflect district concerns and improve our Flexibility Request. He would consider submitting to the USED only those amendments that had the support of every Education Alliance member. After several months of discussion, three amendments met that criteria; Mike reviewed the recommended amendments and agreed to submit them to the USED.

These USED approved amendments to the MDE's ESEA Flexibility plan include:

- Elimination of the requirement that school districts with one or more Priority or Focus Schools set aside and use 20 percent of their federal Title I funds to provide transportation for public school choice, if requested by parents. [A Priority School is in the lowest performing 5 percent of school buildings in the

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state; a Focus School is one of the 10 percent of school buildings that has the largest achievement gap between its top 30 percent and bottom 30 percent of students.] Providing transportation for public school choice still is an allowable use of Title I funds, however, if a local district elects to use those funds for that purpose.

- Revision of the methodology for the state's "Top to Bottom" list to minimize the impact of "outlier scores" in identifying Priority and Focus Schools. This amendment will also exempt from the Focus Schools list a school that is ranked at or above the 75th percentile of the Top to Bottom list and whose bottom 30 percent subgroup's proficiency rate is higher than the state average proficiency rate in at least two subject areas.
- Revision of the requirement for Focus Schools to set aside increasing percentages of their federal Title I funds for academic intervention strategies, depending on how many consecutive years they are identified as Focus Schools.

We are pleased to have these improvements in the state's ESEA Flexibility Plan and look forward to working with districts to implement them for the 2013-14 school year. If you have questions, please contact Abbie Groff-Blaszak at 517.373.8572.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance